

Steven Olikara: A Friend and Ally of Israel and the American Jewish Community

My campaign's theme, Dignity for All, undergirds my approach not only to my domestic policy but also my foreign policy, including my ironclad commitment to ensuring that Israelis and American Jews alike should have the right to live with dignity, safety and security, free from persecution and violent extremist threats. As a Senator, I will work to ensure that America's foreign policy demonstrates our unbreakable bond with Israel and unshakeable support for the dignity of Jewish communities at home and abroad.

America's ironclad commitment to Israel's security

The US-Israel relationship and our commitment to Israel's security must remain sacrosanct. I supported the 10-year, \$38 billion defense aid that the Obama Administration signed with Israel in 2016, because I believe Israelis should be given the ability to defend themselves from those, such as Iran and terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, who threaten Israel's civilians with rockets, terror attacks and threats of annihilation. I will fervently support continued US funding for Israel's Iron Dome and other aid to protect Israeli civilians from terror attacks. When it comes time for our memorandum of understanding to be re-upped in 2026, I will support critical US military assistance to Israel, without preconditions, that will provide Israel with a qualitative military edge over its adversaries in the Middle East.

Iran

While I appreciate the Obama Administration's efforts to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions through the JCPOA, I believe that the deal was deeply flawed in that it did not sufficiently curb Iran's long-term nuclear ambitions, its regional threats to America's allies and interests, and the Iranian regime's gross human rights abuses. The Iranian regime, as a leading state sponsor of terror that regularly vocalizes its wish to wipe Israel off the map, cannot ever be permitted to obtain the means to do so in the form of a nuclear weapon. While I support the Biden Administration's efforts to enter into a "longer and stronger" nuclear deal with the Iranian government, I believe that the US should in parallel take action to curb Iran's ballistic missile program, its support for terrorist proxies Hamas and Hezbollah, and its gross human rights abuses against its own people.

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement against Israel

President Biden is correct to label the BDS movement antisemitic. I will oppose any efforts to delegitimize, stigmatize and label for unique opprobrium Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East.

Israel-Arab Normalization

Israel's 2020 peace deals with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco represent a significant diplomatic achievement and should be welcomed by Americans of all stripes, Democrats and Republicans alike. As a Senator, I will work with a bipartisan team of legislators committed to leveraging the US' capabilities to deepen Israel's commercial, diplomatic and people-to-people ties with these countries, as well as broaden normalization efforts to the broader Muslim and Arab world.

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The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Just as I believe all Israelis have the right to dignity and security, I believe that Palestinians who have suffered not only from conflict with Israel, but from inept, corrupt and repressive governance from their own leadership, similarly deserve the right to live in dignity. I support a two-state outcome to the conflict - one that provides for a secure, Jewish, democratic state with defensible borders, and an independent and self-governing state for the Palestinian people. I understand that peacemaking takes hard work and time, and that in the absence of an opportunity for conflict resolution, the United States should work with Israelis and Palestinians alike towards conflict reduction. In pursuing this approach, I will proactively seek solutions, and listen to bold and creative ideas from those on the ground seeking to provide opportunities to give dignity to both Israelis and Palestinians.

On Antisemitism at Home

In the past several years, America has seen a frightening rise in antisemitic attacks perpetrated by extremists from both the far right and far left. I have been deeply disturbed by the 2021 FBI report that Jews, despite representing less than 2% of the US population, have been victimized by 57% of religiously motivated hate crimes.

I know what it is like to experience discrimination, as a person of color of South Asian descent - and I intend to use my experience to be an ally for others experiencing hate, including my brothers and sisters in the Jewish community. From the "Unite The Right" rally in Charlottesville to the attacks against Jews in places like Pittsburgh, Poway, New York City and Los Angeles, Americans of all stripes must stand resolute and united against antisemitic hate, whether it comes from the extreme right or the extreme left. Just as Jews have long been allies for marginalized communities, from their leadership and allyship in the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Rights Movement and numerous other fights for dignity and equality, the Jewish people deserve our allyship during their time of need. As a Senator, I will stand firmly against antisemitism, terrorism and violent extremism against American Jews, will call out antisemitism no matter whether emanating from the right or the left, and will stand up for the dignity of our Jewish brethren.

Strengthening the US-Israel Tech Relationship

Israel, as the "Startup Nation," has a culture and record of innovation that is nearly unparalleled anywhere in the world. These innovations have benefited not only Israel itself, but also the United States and the world, a real-life illustration of Israel's commitment to the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam, or repairing the world. As a Senator, I look forward to actively supporting increased cooperation in various sectors, including energy, water, agrotech, life sciences and medical technology.